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United States Department of State
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Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is to respond to your committee's request for views on H. Res. 453, "Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives with Respect to the Situation in Rwanda."

The Department of State fully supports the sentiment expressed in the proposed resolution. Indeed, Secretary Christopher, in his June 30 appearance before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, stated unequivocally that genocide has occurred in Rwanda. I am pleased to inform you that the United Nations, with our support, has begun an investigation of violations of international humanitarian law in Rwanda, including genocide.

The United States was a cosponsor of UN Resolution 935, adopted July 1, which establishes an impartial commission of experts to examine and analyze information on violations of international humanitarian law in Rwanda. The resolution calls upon states and international humanitarian organizations to make available to the commission of experts all substantiated information in their possession relevant to "grave violations of international humanitarian law, including breaches of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, committed in Rwanda during the conflict." The Secretary General will report the conclusions of the Commission of experts to the Security Council.

In our statement to the UNSC in support of the UN resolution, Ambassador Gnehm emphasized the need for the commission of experts to build upon the work of the UNHRC Special Rapporteur for Rwanda. He also stressed the need to fix responsibility on those who have directed these acts of violence, in order to bring to a close the horrible cycle of violence which has gripped Rwanda.

The Honorable
Harry A. Johnston, Chairman,
Subcommittee on African Affairs,
House of Representatives.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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In a further effort to bring an end to the fighting and the growing humanitarian disaster in Rwanda, on July 15 President Clinton closed the Rwandan Embassy in Washington and ordered Rwandan personnel to depart the United States. In announcing this decision, the White House insisted again that those Rwandans responsible for genocidal killings and other crimes against humanity be brought to justice.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that from the standpoint of the Administrations' program there is no objection to the submission of this report.

I hope this information is useful to you. Please do not hesitate to call if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Wendy R. Sherman
Assistant Secretary
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